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ABSTRACT

Recent rapid changes in the expectations for women make a literal imitation of one's mother's life increasingly less likely to occur. To explore the process by which the experience of observing their mother's lives becomes a source of their own choices in young adulthood, female junior and senior college students (N=114) responded to an eight-point scale about their preferred lifestyle for the future and wrote open-ended descriptions of their mothers. Three groups of 12 women each were looked at in depth: the most traditional, the most careerist, and a median group. These women participated in a semi-structured interview designed to pursue their responses to models and other sex-role influences. Results indicated that most participants decided that the rewards of imitating their mothers' life patterns were insufficient. The findings suggest that a young woman's assumption as to whether or not career and family are compatible is heavily influenced by the myths and messages in the family of origin and that the example of the mother's life can persuade that marriage and career are compatible, or that a choice must be made between them because of the conviction that family life exists at the expense of the mother. (PAS)

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DAUGHTERS COMMENT ON THE LESSONS OF THEIR MOTHERS' LIVES

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DAUGHTERS COMMENT ON THE LESSONS OF THEIR MOTHERS' LIVES

Diana Grossman Kahn

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Today I will speak about a major issue of my larger study which concerns the effect of the mother's example on the college daughter's lifestyle choice. I will focus on whether daughters anticipate that family and career can be combined and how they envision their future preferences concerning family and career. I will attempt to illuminate the criteria by which daughters evaluate their mothers' lifestyle choices.

Using extensive interviews and questionnaires I explored the nature of the process by which the experience of observing their mothers' lives becomes a source of their own choices in young adulthood. Whereas most studies of maternal role models look at imitation only, the open-ended form of these data allowed the intention of avoidance of models to be expressed as well. Today I will thoroughly describe to you the permutations of imitation and avoidance, but first I would like to place this study within a social historical context, and to share some of my thoughts about an appropriate theoretical framework.

I would like to emphasize that family relationships take place within a social context. What is the possible impact of the present social context on mother-daughter relationships? In places and times other than ours, expectations for women's lives have had more continuity from one generation to the next. A well-known 18th century toast was reported to have been: "May your sons surpass you, and may your daughters be as good as their mothers" (Norton, 1979). In contrast, the present study of contemporary college women takes place at a time in history when rapid changes in the expectations for women make a literal imitation of one's mother's life increasingly less likely to occur.

We can see radical changes in normative expectations for maternal work behavior if we compare Hoffman's (1979) most recent review of maternal employment with Friedan's analysis of The Feminine Mystique in 1963. Hoffman (1979a) stated:

> . . .maternal employment is now the modal pattern. . .now, almost 42% of the mothers of preschoolers are employed. . . .There is every indication that this trend will continue (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1979).

At a recent lecture Hoffman (1979b) stated that the working mother may be a "more appropriate role model" for girls growing up today, in light of the likelihood of their own employment in adulthoood.

In contrast, Friedan described the general disapproval directed toward working mothers just 17 years ago. If the "socially deviant" working mother survived during the era of the feminine mystique, she has lived to see her former aberration become the main criterion for an appropriate role model. Social change assigns non-utility to previously recommended models of mothers more slowly than cars become obsolete, but

quickly enough so that the "problem that has no name" has been named. Indeed one might assert that a new problem has been named, for within half a generation, it is the educated woman without a career who has become the deviant. Social status and approval are now to be found in the pursuit of a career. A recent survey (Markus, 1979) showed that a high level of life satisfaction was likely to be associated with women currently working in a career; women who were not working in a career but who reported that they thought of themselves as a person able to have a career, having had a career in the past, or planning one for some future time, had almost as high a level of life satisfaction as those currently engaged in a career. Since yesteryear's model of mother is likely to be considered deficient in the present, it is therefore inevitable that more young women might find their mother's life pattern undesirable. Because of social change, compounded by the low status and opportunities for women in the past, what is experienced as personal and unique is at the same time a part of social history; the personal is political.

However, the research literature has paid little attention to the possibility of reacting against, or avoiding, the pattern of any model, particularly the maternal model. The concept of modeling involves an assumption that imitation is essential. Models can, however, serve as examples of what to avoid for reflective individuals. The idea of having created oneself in reaction to an unappealing fate, that is, modeling oneself on a conception of the polar opposite of the model, is a theme that is heard often in life and in literature. While research psychologists (Rivers, Barnett and Baruch, 1979) have recognized the existence of this phenomenon, it has been discussed principally through examples from literature, partly because of the paucity of systematic investigation as well as the illuminating nature of expressive sources.

For example, Carolyn Heilbrun, writing from this Institute a few years ago, described as one of the patterns involved in becoming an achieving woman as "a sense of the mother, however affectionately viewed, as representing a female destiny to be avoided at all costs" (Heilbrun, p. 107). Recent work in literary biography and criticism (Davidson and Broner, 1980) documents the prevalence of the motherless Victorian heroine (evidently a facilitative condition), and of daughters who attempted to avoid their mothers' fates. Emily Dickinson was an example of the self-preservative function of the avoidance of the life pattern of the maternal model. According to Mossberg (1980), Emily Dickinson's rejection of her mother and the maternal world, expressed in her poetic claim, "I never had a mother," was a way of protecting herself from the debilitating pull to imitate a social role that was not only disadvantaged, but would also keep her from her art. The critic states:

> For Dickinson the House of Art is not a 'household' - 'God Forbid' - and cannot be established by a woman unless she is one of those who 'never had a mother' to teach her a woman's proper place.

When I describe my findings a little later, you will hear the echo of this theme in the statements of some of the contemporary college women.

Let me outline briefly the conceptual framework which guided my research. When I began, it was disturbing to me to find that a complex matter that engaged women in endless rumination and discussion at all age levels was treated by various disciplines in segmented ways that omitted any consideration of the experience of the individual being studied, and of the possibility of conscious decision and control on the part of the woman involved.

Let me give you some examples of such segmented views. Socialization research of the early 60's rested on assumptions that imitation and sex-role choice are all-or-nothing for one parent or the other, and take place in a political vacuum before the age of six. This yields a vision (as described by Fraiberg, 1959) of parents peacefully cloning same-sex children to live in an unchanging world and breathing a sigh of relief that treacherous waters had been negotiated when the child imitated the "correct" parental model (Kagan, 1964). There is little provision for the possibility of social change or developments after early childhood. Conversely, some sociological research seems devoid of any psychological dimension, such as that which correlates political or ideological attitudes of parents and children, and proceeds to speculate on their transmittal. For example, "the effectiveness with which mothers transmit their attitudes to daughters may be affected by sociodemographic characteristics, especially education." (Smith and Self, 1980, p. 108) One wonders what else is going on in the lives of transmitters: transmission ceremonies? picnics? quarrels about who is to set the table? It is hard to imagine. It does not seem appropriate to study the transmission of ideology unpinned from any personal dimensions in the case of the personal/political issue of sex role choice. Yet there is general acknowledgement of the need to study socialization processes and family dynamics. (Bielby, 1978; Smith and Self, 1980)

My clinical experience too had taught me of the existence of the avoidance or reactive model. I wondered what part this might play in the normal course of development. When I read generalizations about the effects on young women of having one sort of mother or another, I tried to imagine the face behind the punchcard. I wondered about the subjective reality of the women studied. What was their experience in their own terms? What value and meaning did they attribute to their observations?

I tried to infer process from research literature. Much of the psychological research on women's development aims for social utility by relating parental antecedents to outcomes of daughters' achievement, in order to suggest how young women may be reared so as to be capable of taking advantage of new opportunities for women. The present study looks at models within identity formation in more clinical terms. It asks how young women come to terms with the antecedents they have been born into, that is, the process by which they figure out what to do with what they have got. Adolescents exert a great deal of energy to exert some conscious control in choosing those aspects of their manifold and various identifications they wish to develop and keep and those they wish to reduce and shed. Psychodynamic ego theory provides a useful reminder of the

partial, changing, and active nature of the selection of models for imitation and identification. (Erikson, 1959; Schonbar, 1967) The reintegration of old and new identifications in adolescence involves a new relationship to the internalized remnant of the powerful parent of early childhood, as well as a complex set of feelings, judgments, and needs of the young adult for her middle-aged parent.

Therefore, in order to emerge with a more inclusive model, a conceptual framework for the study of this issue would do well to include personal history, situational variables, and the individual's own meanings and choices. By personal history I mean family background and myth, individual endowment and life events, and psychological mechanisms such as those described by social learning and psychodynamic theories of development. For situational variables, I believe that the way Erikson describes the adolescent's need for "effective steps toward a tangible future" (Erikson, 1959, p. 89) is the most relevant way to conceive of the importance of visible models, available roles, and constraints and opportunities of the social milieu. At the center of the integration of personal history and the situation in which the individual will live is the active "maker of meaning" who is engaged in reevaluating the received values of early childhood in light of newer peer values and greater range of models which become visible to her as she learns more about the world. The individual becomes actively engaged in sorting out what meaning her personal history has for her in the light of the situation of opportunities in the present.

The complexity of this process makes it difficult to single out specific aspects of parental background variables that lead to specific outcomes such as child's level of aspiration or career vs. traditional values. It is not surprising that most recent research reports include some recognition of the elusiveness of these relationships, for example

> Despite the evidence of substantial maternal influence, it should be noted that a great deal of variance in the daughters' sex-role attitudes remains unexplained. (Smith and Self, 1980, p. 108)

Journals were even willing to publish negative findings in this area, such as one summarized in the following way:

> Contrary to expectations, the results indicate very few meaningful relationships between any one or any combination of predictor variables and the gender-role development variables. (Klecka and Hillyer, 1977, p. 252)

Clearly, there are complex factors at work which make simple linear relationships hard to establish. Baruch (1972) identified the mother's attitude toward her employment as a way to explain the "now-you-see-it, now-you-don't" effect of maternal employment. Lipman-Blumen (1973) assessed the impact on young women of whether their mothers were satisfied or dissatisfied. This focus on the attitudes of the model were more effective in clarifying the hitherto undepenable effects of demographic variables. Based on these encouraging findings concerning the

effects of mothers' attitudes on daughters, I decided that the attitudes of the reciprocal partner to the relationship, the daughter, might be similarly rewarding to study. Exactly how to study daughters' attitudes was suggested by an article of Kenniston and Kenniston (1964). They were the first to use the phrase "the lesson of the mother's life" to indicate the subject's view of the personal consequences of commitment to the particular life pattern and values of her mother. Therefore, the question in the present study was phrased as follows: "What have you learned about planning your own future from observing your mother's life?" The lesson concept, while cast in commonsense terms, clearly assumes an active "maker of meaning" who derives conclusions from observed data. This implies a Piagetian notion of the active construction of personal reality, as well as psychodynamic assumptions. Social learning theorists present a similar notion which they explain in terms of vicarious reinforcement. Travis and Seipp (1976) credit John Whiting with the "status envy" hypothesis which suggests that "contemporary women may partly develop their sex role ideology by observing the rewards and costs of the sex role adopted by their mothers." (Travis and Seipp, 1976, p. 10) In order to fulfill my ideal of a balanced model, I have located some form of the concept of judging rewards and costs and thereby exercising some selectivity in the imitation or avoidance of mother's life pattern, in literature, in social learning theory, in dynamic psychology and in Piagetian "constructivism."

Let me review the underlying questions. The most essential question is that of freedom of choice. How much "free will" does an individual have in the light of psychic determinism? How much does familial background determine adult choices? Does the determinism of personal history operate mainly by imitation or by avoidance? Will the preferences arising from personal history become irrelevant or negligible as economic realities force most women into the labor market whether it is appealing or not?

Issues of social change are implicated. How does the microcosm of family life affect the larger picture of social trends and forces, and how is it the recipient of these larger trends? Finally, we are in a time in history when there is not one set of choices for all, but the very terms of choice are individually conceived. In the 19th century, due in part to the unavailability of birth control, most women chose in terms of marriage versus an independent livelihood. This is still the underlying assumption of some women, while others assume that marriage, family and career are compatible. After a brief description of the methods used, I will explore how the very terms in which young women conceive of their alternatives are rooted in their family of origin and personal history.

METHODOLOGY

The exploratory study I will describe today was conducted during the Spring semester of 1975 at a small midwestern liberal arts college with high academic standards. Participants were 114 junior and senior women, which was a response rate of one-third of those classes. The data

for the present study were gathered as part of a larger study of late adolescence, which provides a base for further longitudinal research to trace individual themes and sex role predictions through successive life stages. This highly verbal, intellectual group of women was chosen for study because of their expressive resources, keenness of observation and capacity for insight. They were well able to describe the nature of the attraction which various role models held for them, and able to articulate the subtleties of parental attitudes.

As members of the classes of 1975 and 1976 they were a cohort of young women who had experienced the impact of the women's movement early in their adult lives. They had been exposed to a common college culture during a time when the ethos of the sixties was still a part of their personal histories and when the discoveries of consciousness-raising were first shared.

My purpose was to explore the antecedents and attitudes of women with contrasting value positions on sex role preference, in order to understand the dynamics involved in these choices. I looked at three groups in depth: the most traditional, the most careerist, and a median group. My assumption was that the dynamics involved in the extreme groups would illuminate the full range of responses, with the median group as a checkpoint. (Further investigation has validated that assumption, as the participants who fell between these groups tended to behave like the neighboring groups in given variables.) I selected three groups of twelve women each out of the total participants, based upon their own prediction about how they envisioned their future roles as women.

It was difficult to differentiate women for these groups on the basis of their sex role preferences in the milieu of this college because standard sex-role ideology scales were likely to emerge with very little variation in this sophisticated sample (Stewart and Winter, 1974).

This study employed a criterion of sex-role preference which focuses on the relative value of marriage and childrearing versus career. An eight-point scale about preferred lifestyle for the future was devised which asked subjects to state a preference for their future behavior. (This is an expanded version of the five-point scale used by McMillim [1971]):

> Please circle the closest answer to the kind of lifestyle you would PREFER:
>
> 1. Marriage is most important. May work when children in in high school, and before the birth of children.
>
> 2. Marriage and work until birth of first child: Return to work when youngest child around ten.
>
> 3. Marriage and career: Stay home with children from birth to when the youngest is six years old.

4. Marriage and career: Work part-time when children under six.

5. Marriage and full-time career: Continue career full time, while having children.

6. Career and relationship/or marriage: Undecided as to whether to have children.

7. Career and relationship/or marriage: Do not plan to have children.

8. Career comes first: Marriage or relationship has less priority. No children wanted.

This scale asks for a statement of desired future behavior rather than present sex-role ideology because the former is a more personalized way of asking the question; it may also avoid a possible discrepancy between ideology and behavior by simply asking for a statement of preferred lifestyle. Furthermore, a pilot study indicated that this question was indeed able to differentiate this respondent group. Responses received were over the full range of the eight points rather than polarized as is typical of the ideology measures.

The group I will refer to as "traditional" answered the future preference question with numbers 1, 2, or 3 on the above scale. The group I will refer to as "careerist" checked alternatives 7 or 8, which indicated that career was most important to them. All of the median group, which I will refer to as the dual career family choosing women, selected #5 on the scale, marriage and full time career. Thirty-three out of the thirty-six women selected were available to be interviewed; the other three participants were substituted from women who made similar choices. Another question, a 5 point scale of priority given to love or work, was used to place the women in ordinal position from traditional to careerist within each of the ranks of the above scale.

All participants in the first set of data that had been collected had written open-ended descriptions of their mothers, demographic information on mother's employment, and responses to the question of what they had learned from observing their lives. A semi-structured 90 minute interview was designed to pursue in greater detail participants' responses to their models and other sex role influences. These included seeking further elaboration on perception of parents' marriage, and the impact of parents' marriage as a model for participants' future families.

Today I will concentrate on communicating to you the picture I have gained through the exploration of these qualitative data. I am also in the middle of pursuing some quantitative verification of the ideas found in the exploratory study, utilizing the full group of participants. I will occasionally refer to the larger group when it provides amplification of a given point.

INTERPRETATION OF INTERVIEWS

I will present these three groups to you in the order of traditional, dual career, and finally careerist, summarizing the features of the home background of each group. Then (with the participants' kind permission), I will read you their descriptions and responses about what they have learned from observing their mothers' lives. I will comment on the following issues:

1. Imitation and avoidance of the maternal model. There are different combinations of imitation and avoidance, with varying degrees of feeling expressed. Each of these tendencies, the desire to emulate or to discard the life pattern of the mother, finds its fullest expression at opposite ends of the continuum from traditional to careerist. Just as expected, imitation themes are found most clearly among the traditional women, and avoidance themes among the careerists. Yet it would be misleading to forego complexity for the sake of generalization: both imitation and avoidance are heard in all groups, but in differing frequencies, content, and strength of feeling.

2. Changing life patterns and relationships. There are different kinds of changes referred to, including the necessity of modifying mother's pattern due to social change and recognition that their lives will necessarily be different. Interest is expressed in the changes which some of their mothers have undertaken through successive periods of their lives. Changes are also noted in their own attitudes about the roles of their mothers and their relationships with them.

3. Images of housework and housewifery. Much is to be gained in attending to the underlying conception of the mother's relationship with her home, which ranges from a sense of entrapment to a privileged environment of creativity and joy.

4. Educational or occupational deprivation of mothers. For some women, the notion of their mothers as people who have been denied desirable educational opportunities is central to their descriptions of their mothers, and has an impact on their hopes for themselves.

5. Marriage as an obstacle to or vehicle of self-realization. Assumptions vary as to what the advantages and limitations, rewards and costs of marriage are for a woman, based upon observations of the family of origin.

Traditional Women

In these women's families of origin, both parents were highly educated; 75 percent of the fathers had an M.A., M.B.A., M.D., or Ph.D.; all of the mothers had graduated from college and four of them had earned Master's degrees. Fathers were typically employed in well-paid professional occupations at a high socioeconomic level; they included 25 percent medical doctors and no blue collar workers.

When the participants were in junior high school, 25 percent of the mothers were working full time. At the time of the study, 67 percent of the mothers were employed. None of these employed mothers were in male-dominated occupations but were found most often in traditional women's occupations such as teaching and library science. I will present the participants' descriptions and comments about what they have learned from observing their mothers' lives in groups, according to the daughters' attitudes.

Models for Imitation

The following description is typical of the three mothers of traditional women who, because of primary commitment to family, worked part-time at the time of this study, and whose daughters presented them in wholly positive terms.

> Mom is a very well-organized, competent, responsible person--everything she does, she does thoroughly and well. The family and the home have obviously always been her two priorities, and she has been, I think, really successful as a mother, wife and homemaker. In my father's continual absence she has kept all the family ties very close and created a really supportive, close-knit family unit in which Dad is very important. She is also an excellent teacher and devotes a lot of time to community and church service.

The following responses are the "lessons" of the mothers' life as described by these traditional daughters who express total enthusiasm about the life pattern of their mothers:

> (I have learned) among other things, the importance of being well organized and disciplined, the need for real commitment and self-sacrifice, the importance of the ability to laugh.

> Mostly, that the future can take care of itself. My mother did not "plan" either her marriage or her career, and is happy with both.

> That a woman can be a happy and industrious person with her own identity and have a family at the same time--which is what I want to do.

There is no danger expressed among these statements. They express the notions that mothers are personally strong and admirable; it is not necessary to plan or to worry; life works out well for women; there is no necessary conflict between family and personal identity. These women express the assumption that being a woman is being competent, and having a full and rewarding life.

The following two descriptions and "lessons" are typical of mothers who were working full time when their daughters were in college. One woman stated

> My mother is young and very alive. Incredible energy and enthusiasm for what she does--sometimes annoying for those who do not share it. She believes in a divine spark in everyone, and her aim is to find it and let it have life. She never broods or gets really depressed.

She states that she has learned that "it is possible to have family come first and still have a career. One can always get more education. Anything is possible."

Another woman describes her mother with enthusiasm in regard to her beauty and accomplishments, yet is also open about daily wrinkles in their relationship:

> She is beautiful in a real way--she rarely wears make-up and she never goes to the hairdresser. She is very intelligent and very competent. She is a leader in her profession and in any other activities she takes on. She can be extremely irritating and we often snap at each other--I can't describe briefly what is irritating about her.

Despite these presumably minor problems in this relationship, the daughter is unequivocal in her appreciation of her mother's positive effect as a role model. In response to the lesson of mother's life question she states, "She is living proof that I can have children and career at the same time."

As can be seen in the foregoing descriptions, these mothers were described in almost exclusively positive terms, and the messages were stated in terms of wishing to followin the mother's footsteps in some way. Many of the daughters wrote that they concluded that it is possible to combine marriage and career, sometimes stating this in terms that career does not have to be detrimental to family life, with the assumption implicit that family life is of highest priority.

Models for Modification

The following group of women also describe their mothers in positive terms, yet they indicate that they feel the need to modify the mother's pattern. Most of these mothers have not worked, or have gone to work only recently. One daughter comments that she has learned that it is necessary to "maintain an identity separate or not contingent on the marriage and family" through having observed that her mother has "become rejuvenated since going back to work." The daughter states, "I feel that she values herself more as a result." Other comments take the form of mentioning a characteristic they hope to emulate, balanced or qualified by a feature of the life pattern that they wish to avoid. Some examples are

> I want to trust God the way she does. (However) I want to work and have a career.

> I don't want to sit at home and be bored or idle, but I want to give in the way that she does.

In response to the interview question, "What has been the impact of your parents' marriage as a model for your future family?" half of the traditional women responded to the effect that they thought their parents were good models of happiness or trust in marriage. They spoke favorably of their parents in terms of their being "still so in love" or "good companions."

Four of the traditional women commented on inequality of emotional care or household work. One woman stated that her mother was a good model for having career and children, but she was "too subservient, and her career was secondary to her husband's." A woman who rated her parents' marriage as very good for both of them nevertheless responded that her parents' marriage had shown her "a lot not to do: Mom caters to Dad's every whim; he makes the important decisions. She should get care and helping from him too." Another woman, although she expressed a desire for a different kind of husband and a different kind of relationship with him, nevertheless rated her mother's marriage as very good and her father's marriage as excellent:

> I would never marry a man like my father. The household revolves around him. She soothes him; he doesn't soothe her. He has more of a right to get angry than she has. . . .I'm more selfish and even if I were married I would like to preserve a lot more in independence and autonomy. And yet I also have a vision that maybe. . .my family will become so much a part of myself that I won't consider myself separate. I'm not sure how much I want that to happen.

Women who had qualifications to their desire to emulate their parents' marriage nevertheless regarded these marriages highly. This indicated that the daughters evaluated the question of how good the marriage was for the parents and not whether they would like such a marriage for themselves. A degree of maturity and separation is implicit in the ability to employ two separate standards to evaluate the fulfillment of parental needs in their own terms, and daughter's expectations by her own standards. We see in this group very positive attitudes toward family life and reports of positive experiences, yet there are very definite ideas expressed about the desire to change the assumptions about the position of the woman in the marriage.

Summary

There is more evidence of imitation of mothers than of avoidance in the traditional group. The high socioeconomic class of the families of these traditional women underlies the attractiveness of the mother's life pattern and personal presentation: there is no economic or educational deprivation expressed; women work out of choice rather than necessity; they work in female dominated professions rather than pink collar occupations and therefore have satisfying work lives; those who do not work have access to cultural, political, athletic and meaningful volunteer

activities; large families are experienced as blessings rather than economic burdens. Parental marriage is reported in positive terms, as are references to the home and homemaking activities of the mother. These young women appear to place a high value on caring for a home and family, often expressed in terms of religious values. Yet they also express the recognition that expectations are different for themselves than for their mothers, both in the assumption that work outside the home is beneficial for women, and in the assumption that women should expect more equal benefits in marriage.

Two Career Family Group

These twelve participants were selected to be interviewed because they were at the median of the entire group on the prediction of their future lifestyle. These women predicted that they would maintain a career full-time while having children. I will refer to them as the two career family, or dual career women.

Compared to the other groups I am describing today, the parents of this group of women are characterized by the greatest work involvement of mothers, and the most equality in the education and occupation of mothers as compared to fathers. The mothers of this group were the earliest to return to work. Two-thirds worked during participants' elementary school years, and 4/5 were working during the junior high school period. Seventy-five percent of these mothers had educational degrees equal to or higher than those of their husbands. Fathers were professors, blue collar workers, or businessmen. The occupational levels of husband and wife were also similar. Several mothers worked in male-dominated professions such as engineering, politics, business, and college administration. Thus the mothers of this dual group were the highest in power within the family, as indicated in the relative occupational status and education of mother and father (Gillespie, 1976).

There was a striking split among this group of women in regard to mother's education--mothers were either highly educated or were high school graduates. This group contained all of the mothers in the study who held the Ph.D. degree, and a large proportion of the mothers of the entire group under study who were high school graduates. As expected, the lives of the more highly educated mothers were viewed as worthy of imitation. These maternal models who were described in terms of admiration and emulation by the two-career marriage choosing women were working in high status occupations and were highly educated. The maternal models who represented a life pattern to avoid by daughters were described by these daughters as women who had wasted their potential. Most of these mothers were not highly educated, yet a mother with an M.A. was also described this way, because the common theme expressed was that the mother's activities were found wanting when measured by what the daughter felt was appropriate to the mother's abilities. In other cases, the daughter accepted the mother's life pattern as appropriate for the mother but unsuitable or unappealing for herself. They described the lessons of their mothers' lives as neither avoidance or imitation, but rather

that they must seek to add more stimulation and accomplishment to their lives; these were the daughters of mothers who were less highly educated and held lower status jobs.

Models for Imitation

Here is a typical description by a daughter of a professional mother who works full time. Similar to the working mothers of the traditional group, this mother is described as a strong and competent individual who has very definite opinions and preferences. She is also clearly respectful of her daughter as a distinct and separate person. The daughter states

> She is very intelligent, well organized; works hard; very highly concerned with social, political issues; not at all into fashion, high society, entertaining, bridge, sewing-circle kind of things; she is not especially tolerant of sloppiness, laziness, insignificant pastimes; firm, loving but not ever trying to inquire into my personal emotions unless I offer something to her first.

Her statement of what she has learned from her mother's life describes the kind of planning within marriage which made provisions for the mother's career from the start. She states that she has learned

> That one can have a lot of interests outside the home even without a job; that a job can be worked with marriage (my parents settled near "Ivy" University specifically so Mom could get a job 10 years later when we grew up).

Several women who admired their mothers stated that their lives show that marriage and career can be successfully combined. Typically, the women of the two career family group expressed this lesson in the following way: (I have learned) "that it is possible to have a full-time career and a family without sacrificing one or the other." Notice the balanced form of this statement, as compared with the woman in the traditional group described previously who said, "It is possible to have family come first and still have a career." Among the dual career group, there are many descriptions of full and many sided active women, with positive attitudes expressed toward both home and work.

Like the traditional women, there was some description of parents' marriage as a good model of an affectionate relationship, as well as of other features of the parental marriage they wished to emulate. Again, there were also some statements that the woman's burden was greater than the man's in marriage. Unlike the traditional group, however, there was explicit mention of the presence of egalitarian values in the parental relationship, such as "mutual respect. One stated, "Both my parents feel that marriage and children are the ultimate fulfillment for both men and women."

Some of these women's descriptions of their mothers sound very much like those of the traditional women in the sense that the value placed on raising a family is a central and positive feature of their notion of the mother's identity. These are similar to traditional women's descriptions of their mothers' home centered values and views of them as therefore positive models. Similar admiration and wishes to emulate the mother are expressed by both traditional and dual career women. The only difference is in their conclusions as to their own preferred lifestyle. The traditional women see at-home mothering as a valued option, while the dual career women may be equally admiring and even nostalgic about their mother's life pattern, yet it is not acceptable as an option for themselves. One such woman paints a very appealing picture of her mother in the following description, of a woman to whom home means happiness:

> My mother is soft and gentle, a very kind and tolerant woman. She has infinite patience with my father's idiosyncracies. She loves her friends and cares about their happiness. I think she's thought of others more than herself for years and now she is beginning to think about herself. She is witty and quick with words, which intrigue her greatly. She likes to sip sherry by the fire with classical music on and emote about how happy it all makes her feel. She intuits people's needs and puts them at ease.

This daughter's statement of what she has learned from observing her mother expresses her admiration of her mother, and also the fact that she feels she must modify her impulse to imitate her:

> She has carved her niche through the family, it's been the most important thing to her. I've always emulated this in my mind thinking I'd want to be that way too. It's hard to alter this outlook. Her life for the past 25 years has been devotion to raising us very well. I'd like to raise a family with her kind of love and attention.

This mother is reported to have suggested that her daughter plan her life in a less traditional way than herself, and to be enjoying her recent return to work. The daughter chooses to emulate the spirit of her mother's family values while going in the contemporary direction of an earlier return to work. This daughter is inspired by her mother's earlier example, but feels impelled to change the pattern both because of her mother's present opinion and her own assessment of her future needs. In contrast, traditional women often explain the intention to imitate the mother's home centered pattern by a statement of the importance of living according to religious values. Thus it is the conscious decision about which values are paramount for oneself at the present time which determines the choice of lifestyle preferred. While the desire to emulate the mother comes from the daughter's own experience, the suggestion to modify this life pattern may come from a variety of sources: contemporary peer values, political or religious con-

victions, or present or past advice of significant others. It is the young woman's choice of values which influence what she does with her admiration for her mother, whether it takes the form of a literal imitation of the mother's pattern, or a transformation of the pattern while preserving the spirit.

Another positive description of a mother who currently works in a male dominated profession, but was family centered when her children were young, is similar to the traditional women in its positive description, yet emphasizes an issue not previously heard in the traditional group, that of choice:

> My mother is a very outgoing person. She likes people and is very sensitive to other people's feelings. She is intellectually curious and has always been an avid reader, concert goer, etc. But she chose to stay home and bring up my brothers and me.

Here the behavior of the mother is similar to that previously described, yet it is valued because the mother chose to stay home after she had achieved success in a profession. This brief passage suggests that this young woman, in contrast to the group I will describe next, views being a mother at home as an option rather than a trap.

Models for Avoidance

Half of the dual career group described the lessons of their mothers as more for avoidance than emulation. There were two basic themes, which I will call "wasted potential" and "limited horizons."

Three of the dual career daughters described their mothers in terms of wasted potential by contrasting her innate abilities with her actual limitations, as in the following example:

> She is a very strong, capable woman who has become very dependent because her life is totally focused around her home and family. She is often sick, very demanding and authoritarian. Her self-image is very dependent on how thin or fat she is.

The lesson that has been learned is: "Don't give up my sense of self-worth, self-needs, career and interests in marriage." The idea of wasted potential is central to the daughter's description of her mother. Just as in the previous example, the very first sentence presents the dichotomy of a woman who could have been strong, yet is weak:

> She is a bright woman who should but does not work, who would do anything for her children and has done so unfortunately to the extent that their slightest digression upsets her terribly and for which she blames herself. Physically strong but emotionally rather weak.

It is interesting to note that these young women, when asked for a description, respond by describing a problem, that of potential unused. The lesson is already implied in the description alone; her comment about what she has learned is even more definite. She says "that having an independent career is of utmost importance and that being a loving mother must have its limitations for everyone's sake."

These descriptions provide a picture of some distress which is somewhat similar to some of the avoidance models of the traditional women. However, what differentiates the descriptions of mothers' lives to avoid of the traditional women from those of the dual career women is how they explain the unhappiness of the mother. The women who aim for two-career futures clearly attributed their mothers' distress to the fact that the mothers had not fully utilized their capacities. Traditional women were more likely to attribute their mothers' unhappiness to chance, to marrying the wrong husband, or to personal failings.

Models for Addition

Finally, among the dual career group I will turn to the three daughters who describe their mothers in terms which imply that they see their frame of reference as limited. Typically these mothers were not highly educated, and were either clerical workers or full-time housewives. They were described by their daughters in rather objective terms, without enthusiasm but in an attempt to be fair in describing someone who appeared to be dissimilar to them. Here is one such description.

> She is now 54. She's spent her life for her husband, child, and home. She'll sacrifice anything for them. Her own rewards are people's compliments, being able to buy nice clothes. She is proud and secure from having money in the bank.

In response to what she has learned, this daughter stated, "Nothing--maybe being compassionate (?)" This expresses her feelings clearly, that she does not intend to emulate her mother's life pattern. Another mother was described as

> . . .not aggressive, distrusts people with money and power, has had a difficult time financially all her life. She is extremely friendly and open with people she doesn't fear, she is unpretentious, unused to talking about her emotions.

This daughter's balanced response to the lesson question illustrates the complexity of her evaluation of her mother as a role model and as a human being with personal values. She stated

> Negatively, that I have higher ambitions than she has, that I don't want to get stuck in what she's stuck in (this goes for my father too). Positively, that pretentious wealth and culture are not something to strive for.

She rejects the mother as a lifestyle model because her ambitions are higher, yet acknowledges that she values her mother's unpretentiousness. This ability to differentiate between mother's role pattern and mother's personal characteristics is widespread among the entire group under study and shows maturity and individuation. The contrast between daughters' perceptions of their similarity and their closeness to their mothers again illustrates the differentiation between becoming like the mother and having a close relationship. Further statistical assessment of the entire group under study shows that a higher proportion of women whose mothers are highly educated state that they are highly similar to her; yet on the self-assessment of closeness, 78 percent of the entire group is categorized as very close or quite close to their mothers, irrespective of mother's education. Thus the less well educated "limited horizons" mother may be rejected as a role model while she is still valued in relationship to her daughter.

Only women who described their mothers as models which needed to be added to or avoided among the dual career group also described their parents' marriage in very negative terms, such as "resigned," "stagnant" or "limited" relationships. The fathers in these families were blue collar workers, and the mothers were those described as of either "limited horizon" or "wasted potential," i.e. constricted individuals who had become "compulsive cleaners."

Summary

Both imitation and avoidance are heard among the statements of the women who anticipate that they will have a dual career lifestyle in the future, with full investment in both career and family. Strong desires to emulate mothers are articulated in relation to the notion of balance and being able to combine work and family. Avoidance themes are heard in regard to mothers whose unhappiness is attributed to insufficient career investment, or to having failed to develop their abilities, which is described as a kind of deprivation. Some daughters stated that they had higher ambitions than mothers described as limited to the traditional sphere, yet they did not identify marriage per se as the culprit, but only the lack of achievement in work. Therefore in selecting the dual career family as their future lifestyle, the daughters were validating their mothers' pattern in regard to family while avoiding what they saw as insufficient career investment by adding higher ambitions.

Evidence of change in social mores is found in this dual career group. Daughters of positive models who stayed at home with their children have chosen to emulate their spirit while changing the pattern. The dual career women also expressed many ideas on what they would do differently than their parents, such as ways to improve childrearing practices. Like the traditional women, the fact that they have thought about parenting practices shows that they have invested in this future role in their imagination. However, the expressed desire to improve upon the parents' performance is typical only of the two-career group. It contrasts with the emphasis of the traditional women on preserving the values of mothers, with slight additions. This suggests that in between imitation and avoid-

ance are permutations of a spectrum of the investment of creativity in forms of living, from the preservation and modification of the traditional group to the continuation, addition, and recasting of old spirit into new forms by the dual career group.

Careerist Group

I will now describe the third group of women that were interviewed. They were selected because they indicated that they anticipated that career would be most important to them in the future, and they were not interested in having children. I will refer to them as the careerist group because they emphasized career most and family least in their predictions of their future roles.

More careerist women (50 percent) had mothers who had not graduated from college; 67 percent of their fathers had a higher educational degree than that of the mothers. In some cases there was a sizable discrepancy in parental education, such as the father was an M.D. or Ph.D. and the mother was a high school graduate. Three-quarters of the mothers of careerists were currently engaged in part-time clerical or saleswork, helping in the father's business, or being full-time housewives. These mothers were the slowest to return to work. When participants were in junior high school, none of the mothers of this group were working full time. The percentage of mothers remaining housewives up to the present age of the respondent was the highest among the sex role prediction groups, 45 percent.

Models for Imitation

As expected, there were fewer women among the careerist group who described their mothers as models for emulation, 25 percent compared to 75 percent described as having life patterns to avoid. Similarly, there were fewer positive statements about the parents' marriage among this group; the small number of mothers described as positive models were also described as having satisfying marriages.

Two women of this careerist group described their mothers as positive models. They each stated that they had learned from their mothers that it was never too late to start a new career, and

> I don't have to start my career right out of college, I can have an interesting life even when I am not young; I should be careful having children.

The mothers of these two women worked full time at present, one as a social worker and the other as a government official. Both of these cases are examples of a mixed message about motherhood and career. Both daughters have received cautionary impressions about early childrearing of large families, along with positive impressions of mother's present role.

I will read selections from an extensive description of her mother by one of these careerist daughters. Her statement illuminates the way a child's notion of the ideal mother changes through successive developmental periods. You will hear how the most important issue for the daughter of a particular developmental period provides the criteria by which she evaluates her mother. In junior high school, the mother is judged by her ability to embody and foster early adolescent goals of physical beauty and popularity. At present the mother is valued because she seems happy with herself and because she has succeeded in the developmental task which currently challenges the daughter, that of finding a place for herself in the world of work. The daughter wrote:

> It is very difficult for me to describe my mother. She is a fascinating, wonderful and complex person. Throughout my life I have had very differing opinions of her. In looking back on my life with her is her understanding and giving nature which stands out. When my brother and sister and I were young--she always put our lives in front of her own. I think she did this too much.
>
> She always did things for me. Of course, I remember her taking care of me in the middle of the night when I was sick. She also made sure that my halloween costumes were perfect, she made my clothes, she was head of the Campfire group. She (with my Dad) taught ballroom dancing to us at church. She was always room mother--the list is endless.
>
> I didn't appreciate her doing all of these things--as I wanted my life to be more private. She also demanded a lot--or rather what I thought at the time to be a lot. That is, she asked that I take care of ourselves in terms of cleaning, helping in the kitchen, etc.
>
> She expected a lot of me academically--it hurt her when I failed courses--and that is the major reason why I did fail. I rebelled against her tremendously in junior high. I hated her. For a period of years I never spoke to her except for screaming. I thought she wasn't pretty, she wasn't the party type, she always read books, and she hated shopping. She was too practical. And she always asked blatant questions. . . .I look back on that time with great sadness. . . .
>
> But now she most definitely puts her own life ahead of ours. . . .times have changed and we are now close. She is happier now than she has ever been in her entire life, she says. She also says that for the first time in her life she has self-confidence. I love to watch her now and smile with pride. When I am at a meeting over which she is presiding, I want to stand up and shout, "That's my mom."

At present, her mother's self-confidence and activity make her an appreciated role model in terms of work, while the daughter also mentions that the memory of stormy times and unappreciated maternal devotion make the daughter question whether it is worthwhile to have children. This careerist's images of her mother in the present and the past provide an informative contrast with one of the positive models of the dual career group, the mother who was depicted as joyful at home. Both daughters

depict their mothers as positive models at present who are happy in their work. Yet the differences in their own lifestyle preferences for the future, careerist and dual career family, I submit, are the outcome of their different observations of the degree of satisfaction of each of their mothers in the earlier period of intensive investment in childrearing.

Another theme which is characteristic of the careerist group involves neither imitation nor avoidance, but expresses a desire to make restitution for mother's lost opportunities by doing what the mother did not do, but may have hoped for. Even the above careerist daughter who considers her mother a positive model expresses this idea: "My mother is proud of me. . .likes me. . .respects me. In many ways I am the person she couldn't be. I am going into X, a field which she would have liked to go into."

Although a third woman described her mother in positive terms, she evidently did not choose to emulate her mother. She described her as a housewife who

> inwardly has the real beauty that comes from the satisfaction of doing what one considers to be important and doing it well. To her, these satisfactions come from keeping the house, taking care of my father, and us.

She described the marriage of each of her parents as excellent. Yet when asked for her ideas about marriage for herself she responded, ". . .never in any way do I want a marriage like that." She stated that her parents were very happy together, but she required intellectual as well as emotional stimulation, did not care to have children, and would not consider having a life like that of her mother. This young woman, like the daughters of the dual career group who described mothers in terms of "limited horizons" could appreciate the mother and her choices while choosing differently for herself. Unlike the women in the dual career group, however, she preferred to emulate her mother's degree of satisfaction while avoiding her life pattern. She stated that she had learned from her mother's life, "to figure out what will make you happy and do it to the best of your ability."

Thus there was little desire to emulate the mother's life pattern among the careerists; even among the three women who responded to the lesson question in the form of a positive message, one of them wished to emulate only the mother's self-knowledge and not her role pattern, and the other two women appeared to have positive ideas about their mothers' present work involvement, but less positive images of her earlier role at home when her children were younger.

Models for Avoidance

Most of the women, 75 percent, viewed their mothers' participation or embeddedness in the family as the principal reason that she lacked what they would consider a satisfying life for themselves. At the time of this study most of them were housewives, employed part-time, or part-time helpers in business. Some daughters said that they had learned that early marriage "ties you down" and "closes off options." Others described growing up in a large family as an experience of either material deprivation or as an experience of finding there is insufficient energy among family members for caring for family needs. Mothers were sometimes portrayed as spending their entire adult life in caring for children; there were a few families with this reality of a large number of children. The attribution that mother wasted her potential because she chose family life instead of career was sometimes described as the daughter's own interpretation, and sometimes quoted as advice from parents. Some parents were reported to have explicitly cautioned daughters to avoid the traps they had fallen into, of early marriage or limited career preparation. In some cases the mother's lifestyle was described as less attractive than the father, particularly when the father was very much more highly educated, and the mother was not employed outside the home. The theme of the mother's deprivation of the education she had desired in her youth was very important among careerist daughters.

There was a remarkable trend in the careerist women's descriptions of their mothers. Women in the other two groups described their mothers mainly in terms of their present attributes. The careerists, however, when asked to describe their mothers, often responded by telling their life stories, emphasizing some handicap, usually their having failed to attain an education; for example:

> She is a brilliant woman, and she loves reading and learning, but never could go to college because her father was a drunk who deserted the family when she was 9--in 1937--and she had to go to work right out of high school to support her mother. She is not bitter about this, but she is sorry she never had a chance at college, as she would have loved it at least as intensely as I do. Maybe this is one reason why she wants us all to go to college and doesn't think twice about sacrifices for it.

Other life stories included two mothers who were immigrants who faced the task of adjusting to a new country. The emphasis in these stories was on explaining what prevented these mothers from obtaining higher education. Several women expressed the opinion that having children was a serious impediment to their mothers, and that they had learned to be careful about having children, settling down, and getting married.

Matrophobia. The careerist group contained the highest proportion of avoidance lessons, and most of these were stated with indications of strong feeling. Since the expression of the wish to avoid a mother's

life was expressed so strongly in this group as to sometimes reach the point of "matrophobia"--the fear of becoming one's mother (Rich, 1976, p. 235). I will use the avoidance statements of the careerists to illustrate the relationship between identification (assessed by participants' estimate of how similar they are to their mothers) and the avoidance wish expressed. Participants' statements were examined in relation to the question of whether these strong avoidance statements were produced by the degree of undesirability of the mother's life according to the daughter, or whether the extent of the daughter's identification with the mother was likely to result in "matrophobia."

The strength of feeling in avoidance statements occurs in a curvilinear relationship to the degree of perceived similarity to the mother (a relationship which is also found in further investigation of the entire group under study). Young women who perceive themselves as moderately similar to their mothers express avoidance wishes rather casually, without strong affect. Women who perceive themselves as very different from their mothers express very strong avoidance wishes, to go very far from their mothers' pattern, but they do not express any phobic sentiments. Women who perceive themselves as highly similar and who also have strong feelings about avoiding the mother's life pattern, express this ambivalent pull in statements of the fear of becoming like the mother against their wishes.

Here are some lesson statements which are typical of women who perceive themselves as dissimilar to mother.

> Not to kill a lot of myself and my potential by marrying and getting stuck in a house with no other meaningful pursuits.

> Get 180 degrees away! don't get swallowed up in self pity. Don't settle for less than your goal. Don't get married at 19.

Women who saw themselves as moderately similar to their mothers stated that they had learned to do something differently from them, but they expressed themselves more matter-of-factly and with less passion, for example

> I must have equal education with a man with whom I have a relationship, because that contributes to my mother's insecurity and lack of self-confidence.

> I don't want to live vicariously through children.

Finally, the greatest degree of perceived similarity to the mother was associated with the fear that one would end up like her. These women stated:

> I'm more and more like her--We're even starting to look alike--but I'm afraid to end up like her.

> I fear, but doubt I will, fall into her trap. I've learned I can't separate good feelings about myself and others. . . .I'm so similar to her temperamentally that I read her situation as what I'd fall into if everything went wrong in my life.

Participants' degree of identification did not determine whether the mother was a lifestyle model for imitation or avoidance, but it was related to emotional involvement with her. Women who perceived themselves as moderately similar to their mothers made rather objective sounding judgments about conditions of their mothers' lives. Those who perceived themselves as highly similar to their mothers were likely to be emotionally effected and concerned with the mother's feelings, fate, and wasted potential. Women with avoidance models who rated themselves as similar expressed the fear of becoming like their mothers against their wishes. Women who rejected their mother's lifestyle and also saw themselves as very different did not express fear of becoming like them, but some expressed very strong avoidance wishes.

Yet, irrespective of the degree of similarity or identification, the daughter's intellectual judgment of the costs and benefits of her mother's life appeared to be paramount. That is, perceived similarity and affective involvement with mother did not prevent these highly intelligent women from drawing their own conclusions as to the costs and benefits of their mother's particular lifestyle.

However, as the emotions expressed in the avoidance statements demonstrate, high perceived similarity and closeness to the mother appeared to be an inner barrier to pursuing a different course, in cases where the rational judgment concluded that avoidance of her pattern was best. Conversely, where intellectual judgment found mother's lifestyle worthy of emulation, perceived similarity appeared to enhance the comfort in planning to pursue this pattern.

The "matrophobia" statements point to the difficulty of emulating personality traits while differing in role pattern. The moderately mother identified women seem to have already differentiated themselves in their ability to see themselves as sharing some but not most personality traits. Both high and low similarity women appear to employ a good deal of energy in their intentions to avoid their mother's pattern. The difference may be that the low similarity women have already operationalized the desire to differentiate themselves from the mothers in personality traits, while the high similarity women who have previously identified strongly with mothers now are struggling with differentiation in the other area of role pattern.

Housework. Another thematic lesson from the mother's life for these career oriented daughters revolves around housework and its meaning to the mothers. The home has so far been portrayed in a positive way by traditional and dual career family women, and as a constricted or limited world among dual career daughters of less educated women; among

the careerists housework becomes an issue which encapsulates strong feelings about women's roles. (Indeed I think this personal-political issue has become fraught with significance for most of us as it replaces sex and aggression and even money as a very intimate topic. I have saved it for last in my discussion because I know the issue is capable of sending so many of us home to unfinished business in our imaginations that few may remain able to attend my conclusions.)

Five of the twelve careerists mention housework in relation to their avoidance wishes: two mothers are characterized as "compulsive cleaners," two have given up the struggle to keep a household organized, and another is described in a condition of ambivalence which is painful.

In the classic case of Dora, Freud described her inability to respect her mother who suffered from "housewives' obsessiveness." Similarly, this kind of description among these contemporary women is associated with their wishes that the mother would do more outside the home. For example, this careerist has a very clear diagnosis of what she views as her mother's misuse of her capacities in the following description.

> Intelligent woman, but sometimes very stubborn. I'm amazed at her for being just a housewife--she needs more intellectual stimulation. Takes it out by being a compulsive cleaner.

The consequences of this choice are very grave to the daughter who is unequivocal about what she has learned from observing her mother: "Not to kill a lot of myself and my potential by marrying and getting stuck in a house with no other meaningful pursuits."

Two of the careerist women described mothers who have for the most part given up trying to organize their households. I want to make a very clear differentiation here between homes in which mother does everything, homes in which all family members are organized to do the essential tasks, and homes which are in the process of changing from the former system to the latter egalitarian system, a process which often takes years. In both of these careerists' homes, mothers have given up their former overarching responsibilities, but no other system has arisen to take its place. While the "revolt of mother" is often a necessary first step in household reorganization, in these careerists' households, what is striking is not only the diminished housework of the mother in recent years, but the terms in which it is described. The mother is portrayed as overwhelmed and overworked, and the rest of the family also has no energy or time to care or to take care, when mother abdicates her historic post. What is missing is the possibility that a family can make other arrangements when mothers begin to work outside the home, and the idea of a process of negotiating change in the family. In these descriptions, the changes have not been worked out by mutual agreement, but laid down by default. The alternatives appear extreme: mothers are either martyred and do everything, or they do nothing and the home becomes an unpleasant place to live. The young woman stated

> My mother was basically a housewife for. . .was pregnant for nine years, but she's gone back to work in the last four years. My father does more around the house than she does; lots more.

He's done all the grocery shopping for fifteen years now; when she decided she was tired of it and stopped. So he picked it up by default.

. . .There isn't a whole lot of organization in the house. . . very little. . .since my mother went back to work, everybody is fending for themselves like if somebody wants dinner they can cook dinner, and if they don't feel like cooking dinner that day they're not going to get any dinner. If you want your clothes cleaned, you better do them yourself or wait two months. My mother does laundry every two months. She cleans the house every couple of months. Really basically nothing gets done.

("Was it always this way?" interviewer asked.) Ogodno. Everybody had a job and had to do their job on time and I would get . . .if I didn't do the dishes by seven o'clock. The house was clean.

("Why was there such a radical change?") My mother only had a certain amount of energy, and when she went back to work that was all her energy. . .almost overnight she didn't care what the house looked like, and nobody else ever cared, so she just stopped. It's very weird. She used to be a normal housewife, getting mad about having to clean up after people all the time.

In these families, the notion that there is not sufficient energy to be a mother and to work outside the home is not just an inner attitude, but is enacted daily among the family members. In this family in particular, both parents are outspoken about not wishing their daughter to be entrapped by early marriage. In the other family, they have stated their hopes that her ambitions will not be thwarted. There is no such overt expression in the families of the compulsive cleaners, the wishes go in the other direction of daughter for mother.

The following description of a mother illuminates a relationship between acceptance of household tasks and thwarted ambitions: that housework is difficult for her because it may signify to her what she has lost. The daughter states,

I respect and love her enormously--she's a great favorite with all my friends. She has a terrific sense of humor and an original mind. She gets extremely depressed from housework, which she hates. Like me, she responds to work she hates by losing all energy and initiative and taking forever to do anything. . . .She never got to make full use of her talents (supporting her family during the Depression, then marriage). She wanted to be an "x" and had to refuse the scholarship because her family was starving. . . .She's "made peace" by giving up a lot; she probably would characterize herself as happy.

Summary

Among the careerist group, there are many more avoidance lessons than imitation of mothers' lifestyles. The few imitation statements pertain to present worklife or general personality and not to family role as in the traditional group. The careerist choice of the intention to refrain from investing in childrearing may result from perceptions that marriage and family can be detrimental to a woman's satisfaction or from hearing about deprivations, in education and career development occasioned by early marriage and raising large families. The perceived educational deprivation of the mother is an important motivator to careerist choosing women to make sure that they avoid this position by making career and education their foremost priority.

Yet these mothers of careerists who were described as educationally deprived were not less educated than the "limited horizons" mothers of the dual career family choosing women. How can the differing choices of daughters be accounted for? First is the fact that the careerist daughters were aware of the mother's earlier thwarted ambitions or they interpret present frustration as the result of low education; among dual career family choosing women there was no mention of regret over opportunities not taken, or of potential which was denied development. These blue collar two career women tended to described their mothers' lives as boring and limited, but not wasted and frustrated. This is an important difference. Careerist women had seen and/or heard from mother or father that marriage and family had prevented their mothers from having satisfying lives; they had therefore chosen career without marriage. The two career women, however, had decided that their mothers' lives were missing something which needed to be added, but they did not see marriage and childrearing per se as having robbed their mothers. They did not see them as victims, but rather as people who had limited horizons which were fine for them but not for their daughters.

The other difference between careerists and dual career choosing women is that the fathers of the latter had the same educational level as the mother, high school graduation, or less, while in the families of careerists, the high school education of the mother was contrasted with the high educational and occupational level of the father (M.D. or Ph.D.). The reaction of careerists varied to this kind of educational differential between parents. However, whether they witnessed embarrassment on the part of the mother, or whether they merely received the impression that professional fathers had a more interesting life than housewife mothers, this educational differential of a less educated mother as compared to father is a characteristic antecedent of the choice of a careerist lifestyle. The difference is in the impression for careerists that marriage precludes other attainments for women. In contrast with the preservation, modification and recasting of the family valuing women of the two other groups, the careerists' characteristic reaction to maternal models was of creative avoidance, or restitution for mother's lost opportunities.

DISCUSSION

The foregoing data have illustrated the utility of the concept of role model avoidance. These data have also shown the complex, partial and changing aspects of the integration of role models into identity and life plans. Examples have been described where the daughter is aware of the way in which her mother has been both a positive and a negative model of different life tasks at different periods.

The crucial difference between imitation and avoidance is that the latter presupposes the necessity of complex decisions about rewards and costs, values, and therefore conscious control. Imitation of the mother's lifestyle was highly selective, based on an assessment of the potential rewards and costs. These rewards and costs were evaluated according to a spectrum of contemporary expectations; the observed facts of the mother's life are judged in comparison to a contemporary standard of what a young woman is entitled to, and of what a gratifying life should include.

A large minority of the participants of this study had decided that the rewards were insufficient, and that they therefore would avoid the life patterns of their mothers; the concept of modeling or imitation is useless to account for their choices. The existence and origin of the avoidance choice can explain the puzzle that Bielby (1978) presents that the career salience of never married women does not conform to the interpretation, which holds for women of other marital statuses, that "positive attitudes toward career salience are formed during the daughter's socialization" (p. 263). The concept of role model avoidance provides an alternative explanation. Career salient women who choose not to marry may have undertaken a similar decision to that of the careerists of this study, in order to avoid the career deprivation of their non-working mothers.

A young woman's assumption as to whether or not career and family are compatible is heavily influenced by the myths and messages in the family of origin. The statements I have described and quoted demonstrate that the example of the mother's life can persuade that marriage and career are compatible, or that a choice must be made between them because of the conviction that family life is at the expense of the mother. I have discussed the difference between careerist and dual career women who describe their mothers as having wasted their potential. Careerists are more likely to conclude that marriage is to be avoided, while dual career family choosing women characteristically conclude that a woman should retain more individual identity and career commitment while remaining within the institution of marriage.

I spoke earlier of freedom of choice and determinism. It is difficult to have a clear notion of what maximum freedom might consist in regard to the choice of lifestyle. Some limitations are imposed by personal history and temperament; some by the values held, and others by what is possible in the society.

Both careerist and traditional women might view a highly ambitious career commitment and marriage as incompatible. Yet their choice of priority was different, as well as their interpretations of the causes of women's discontent. The few traditional women who had some doubts and confusion about their futures or some desires to do differently from their mothers, attributed their lack of happy anticipation of their chosen traditional path to personal inadequacy. They blamed themselves for their failure to come up to their valued ideals of what is appropriate. When they described their mothers as unhappy they similarly attributed this to personal failure or to having married the wrong husband. Thus some traditional women may be constricted by the values they hold from choosing to avoid the mother's life pattern even if it has not been beneficial to her, or is already experienced as thwarting to the daughter. Conversely for the careerists, experiences in their family of origin may preclude the choice of a dual career family lifestyle.

The power of individual judgment was seen in the choices of the careerists to attempt to go far from their mothers' patterns. However, choice was not "free" in the sense of random or arbitrary. The mother's lifestyle can be avoided but not easily ignored. The individual must in some way come to terms with her own conclusions about her mother's life. The foregoing data indicate that daughters can choose to go far from patterns in the family of origin. I suggest, however, that it takes a greater amount of energy to construe a life based upon a creative notion of an ideal constructed in part as the opposite of what one has experienced than it does to construct a life based on more familiar, intimate scenes and experiences. I suspect that the family as model and the maternal model do not limit what one can choose to do. I predict that further follow-up studies of this group may show that the limits are not on what one can do, or even on what one can imagine, as the search for alternative models shows us, but only on the degree of psychological comfort in pursuing one's carefully chosen course. In other words, these interviews support the psychodynamic logic that avoidance requires more energy than imitation.

The importance of individual meanings is shown in the foregoing descriptions. They have provided illustrations of demographic variables whose effects are modified by the meanings attributed to them by daughters. For example, in the relation of mother's educational level to the "lesson" of her life, some women who hold Masters degrees, as well as women who are high school graduates or college dropouts, are considered to have wasted their potential by daughters. The interpretation of wasted potential is assigned according to individual criteria of what might have been, in terms of what one is entitled to or is capable of attaining, as exemplifieid by what is visible in the socioeconomic class or father's occupation which provides a point of reference.

The number of siblings in the family of origin is another such variable. Several traditional women came from large families as well as careerists, but economic comfort and satisfaction in the fulfillment of religious values resulted in a positive view of family life among the traditional, but not the careerist women.

However, it is not to be obscured that these demographic variables of education and employment did have an impact. Each of the three groups that I have described had a characteristic profile of antecedents which differed from those of the others. This provided the reality of a common basis for individual interpretations, which were made according to the meaning placed upon these facts either by the parents themselves or the daughter, or both.

There was great awareness among these participants of contemporary ideas about changing sex-role concepts. Mothers appeared to have been judged by two separate criteria: what mother accepted for herself, and daughter's expectations for herself. Evidence of social change in expectations was found in the fact that virtually all participants (except one fourth of the traditional women) mentioned that some modification of mother's lifestyle in the direction of greater individual self-realization was desired.

It is important to note the contrast between the extent of positive relationships suggested by the interviews and the pervasiveness of wishing to avoid or modify the maternal pattern. I want to emphasize that these data show that the daughters do differentiate between mother's life pattern as a role model and the relationship with mother as a person. While only thirteen percent of the entire group under study stated the lessons they have learned in an exclusively positive sentence structure ("I have learned from her example to x" rather than "I have learned from her example not to x") a majority, 61 percent, describe their mothers with enthusiasm, admiration, or empathy.

This disparity between the positive personal evaluation of the mother and rejection of her life prospects is an inevitable result where the present generation of female workers earn 59¢ to the male worker's dollar, and their daughters are encouraged to have higher expectations. Several of the mothers of careerists were low in family power as measured by occupational status and education (Gillespie, 1976). These were the mothers whose lifestyles their daughters preferred to avoid. This demonstrated that young women's judgments of their mothers' patterns as enviable or worthy of avoidance were based upon realistic perceptions of status within the family. It is here that we see the interface between public and private, where economic and social status rewards from the workplace also determine status within the family and thereby make one lifestyle more appealing than another for imitation.

I have illustrated how young adults choose among values in the light of personal history. Although many of the values held by young adults may have been received in early childhood, the struggle to integrate these values with contemporary values takes place in the present. Lifestyle decisions are determined by which values are ascendant in the present. Therefore choices about marriage and career seem to be quite accessible to later influences and ideals, as well as imitating or reacting against parental models. Sex role value choice is not a simple imitation of those with whom one lives. It is intimate experience deeply reflected upon; it is personal history evaluated with all of the intellectual resources at one's disposal. Despite the evident power of

personal history, as demonstrated in these interviews, the conscious effort involved in evaluating models suggests that changes in attitudes can be integrated into a vision of life within a relatively short period. Personal history provides images of a rewarding life; contemporary values define what is desirable; the present social context dictates what is possible.

A model of lifestyle choice, suggested by analysis of these interviews, spans the personal and the political, or the psychological mechanism and the sociological condition. What sociologists have labeled the effects of patterns of stratification and dominance (Vanfossen, 1977) within the family can be explained psychologically in terms of cognitive evaluation of rewards and costs of particular life choices. That is, when an adolescent observes that her mother's life does not appear to have purpose and stimulation, the way in which she attributes those deficiencies will explain her own lifestyle preferences. The developing adolescent sees the effect of differentials in family power and career gratification in terms of the felt quality of the lives of her parents.

A complex model is needed which allows for changing situations, new incursions of values, and repeated conscious decision making among conflicting values. Early in the process we find personal history, the individual familial background variables and initial received familial and school values of early childhood and latency. Then at adolescence, peer values become more important; alternative values of the wider culture and other subgroups and cultures become accessible, and must be selected and integrated into the existing personal framework. This individual integration of values is the filter through which the personal history is then remembered, reevaluated and transformed into preferences, hopes and fears for the future.

Social learning theory and the status envy hypothesis account for the mechanisms involved in the judgment of the rewards and costs of lifestyle patterns. However, any estimation of rewards and costs is done by a person with a particular set of values, a particular situation within a social context with visible alternatives, and her own version of current assumptions about what a human being is entitled to. It is the social context which suggests the standard of what one is entitled to, and the availability of alternatives by which to measure whether the costs are too great or a small price to pay.

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